

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

----- 021959

R 071816Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3894

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 25962

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, US, MARR

SUBJECT: SECDEF CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER  
SAUVAGNARGUES SEPTEMBER 29

1. FOLLOWING IS UNCLEARED MEMCON        BETWEEN  
DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND FOREIGN MINISTER  
SAUVAGNARGUES IN LATTER'S OFFICE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29,  
1975.

2. EAST-WEST BALANCE OF POWER --  
SECDEF BEGAN WITH STATEMENT THAT PREVAILING ATMOSPHERE  
HAS BEEN CONDUCIVE TO SLACK MILITARY EFFORT IN THE WEST,  
BUT NOT IN THE USSR. THE SLOW EROSION OF THE MILITARY  
BALANCE IN THE SOVIETS' FLAVOR IS STILL CONTINUING.  
PERIL POINT HAS NOT YET BEEN REACHED, BUT CONTINUATION  
OF TREND COULD EVENTUALLY GIVE SOVIETS MILITARY  
PARAMOUNTCY. THE IMAGE OF AN ALL-POWERFUL USSR COULD  
BRING ABOUT INTERNAL POLITICAL CHANGE IN EUROPE AND  
MIDDLE EAST WITHOUT SOVIETS NEEDING TO UTILIZE MILITARY  
FORCE. TO DATE, EROSION OF POWER BALANCE IN SOVIET  
FAVOR HAS BEEN OFFSET BY SOVIET-CHINESE ANTAGONISM.

3. SAUVAGNARGUES RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD NOT QUESTION  
SECDEF'S ANALYSIS. DETENTE MUST BE BASED ON A MILITARY  
BALANCE. NO EROSION SHOULD BE PERMITTED. PRESIDENT  
Giscard D'Estaing HAS SAID FRANCE WILL MAINTAIN ITS  
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MILITARY EFFORT. IF FRENCH MILITARY FORCES ARE NOT

INCREASED, THERE WILL AT LEAST BE NO REDUCTIONS.  
FRANCE WILL NOT RE-ENTER THE NATO INTEGRATED COMMAND,  
BUT FRANCE REMAINS A FULL PARTNER OF THE ALLIANCE.

4. MBFR --

SAUVAGNARGUES SAID GOF IS CONCERNED ABOUT CURRENT TREND IN MBFR. "ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT TAKE PART, WE BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES." GOF'S MAIN OBJECTION IS TO THE PROPOSAL TO CONTRACTUALIZE THE NUMBER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE. GOF IS NOT WORRIED ABOUT ANY UNILATERAL REDUCTION IN NUCLEAR WARHEADS, BUT CANNOT AGREE TO A CEILING. A CEILING SHOULD BE LIMITED TO PERSONNEL WHERE THE SOVIETS HAVE THE ADVANTAGE AT PRESENT. A CEILING ON STRATEGIC WEAPONS HURTS THE WEST SINCE IT HAS THE ADVANTAGE IN THIS AREA.

5. SECDEF REPLIED THAT PURPOSE OF MBFR IS GREATER SECURITY FOR EUROPE, AND THIS OBJECTIVE MUST BE KEPT. MAJOR FACTOR IS THE OBJECTIVE OF PREVENTING A MASSIVE SOVIET FORWARD DEPLOYMENT. WE MUST REDUCE THIS SOVIET CAPABILITY OR MBFR IS NOT REALLY WORTH THE EFFORT. IN THIS CONTEXT, SAUVAGNARGUES ASKED IF REDUCTION OF 2,000 SOVIET TANKS WOULD REALLY PROVIDE GREATER SECURITY TO THE WEST. THERE MIGHT BE AN ARGUMENT FOR BEING TOUGHER WITH THE SOVIETS AT THIS POINT SINCE "THE WEST GAVE THE SOVIETS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY THEY WANTED AT HELSINKI." IF SOVIETS WANT TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM OF THEIR DETENTE IMAGE, WEST SHOULD TELL THEM THAT A RATIO OF 16,000 TO 5,000 TANKS MAKES NO SENSE. SAUVAGNARGUES SAID THERE IS ALSO STRONG ARGUMENT FOR REJECTING SPECIAL ZONES IN EUROPE. WHAT IS DONE IN A SINGLE ZONE DOES NOT REALLY AFFECT THE MILITARY BALANCE. THE AMERICANS MUST RETREAT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC WHILE THE USSR RETREATS ONLY 200 KILOMETERS. SECDEF REPLIED THAT WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE SOVIET PROBLEMS IN MOVING TANKS BACK TO WEST FROM THE SOVIET UNION. THE PROBLEMS ARE SUCH THAT WE WOULD HAVE EARLY WARNING OF ANY SUCH MOVEMENT. AS FAR AS ATLANTIC IS CONCERNED, U.S. WANTS TO BE IN POSITION TO MOVE FORCES BACK WITHIN 30 DAYS, FLYING ONE DIVISION ACROSS EVERY

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THREE DAYS.

6. FLEXIBLE RESPONSE --

SAUVAGNARGUES SAID THAT WHILE FIRST PRIORITY IS TO MAINTAIN THE STRATEGIC BALANCE, SECOND IS TO DETER ANY ATTACK, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, ON GERMANY. "WE MUST NOT GIVE THE SOVIETS A GUARANTEE THAT A LIMITED ATTACK WOULD NOT RECEIVE A TAKNUKE RESPONSE. WE HAVE THE

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R 071816Z OCT 75  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3895

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 25962

EXDIS

FEELING THAT UNDER THE DOCTRINE OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE,  
THE SOVIETS HAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT WEST'S FIRST RESPONSE  
TO A CONVENTIONAL ATTACK WILL BE CONVENTIONAL. IF WE  
LOSE THE FIRST ROUND, WE MAY FIND OURSELVES WIT/H NO  
FURTHER RE COURSE. SOVIETS MUST REALIZE THAT THEY ARE  
THE FIRST TO EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO NUCLEAR RETALIATION",  
SAUVAGNARGUES SAID.

7. SECDEF SAID THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN SOVIETS  
IN A STATE OF UNCERTAINTY AND DOUBT. SOVIETS KNOW THAT  
WE WILL RESPOND TO CONVENTIONAL ATTACK WITH CONVENTIONAL  
RESPONSE, BUT THEY ALSO REALIZE THAT WEST WILL USE  
WHATEVER FORCE IS NECESSARY TO STOP THEM FROM ACHIEVING  
THEIR OBJECTIVE. SOVIETS DO NOT HAVE ANY REAL GUARAN-  
TEES ABOUT NATURE OF WESTERN RESPONSE, THEREFORE.

8. STANDARDIZATION IN NATO --  
SAUVAGNARGUES ASKED SECDEF IF HE HAD CONCEPT OF A  
GENERAL AGREEMENT WITHIN NATO ON STANDARDIZATION.  
SECDEF RESPONDED THAT EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON MAKING  
PROGRESS TOWARD AN EVENTUAL GENERAL AGREEMENT THROUGH  
THE MECHANISM OF SPECIFIC CASES OF MUTUAL PURCHASES OF  
EQUIPMENT. SECDEF SAID STANDARDIZATION IS A PRACTICAL  
PROBLEM AS WELL AS A THEOLOGICAL ONE. A GRAND SCHEME  
WITHOUT SPECIFIC SMALL STEPS SHOWING PROGRESS CAN ONLY  
GENERATE SCEPTICISM. SAUVAGNARGUES SAID THAT GOF IS

WILLING TO LISTEN TO ALL IDEAS ON STANDARDIZATION, BUT  
DOES NOT WANT TO BE CRUSHED BY AMERICAN INDUSTRY.

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FRANCE MUST MAINTAIN ITS OWN ARMS INDUSTRY. SECDEF  
RESPONDED THAT ROAD TO BEING CRUSHED INDUSTRIALLY IS  
PAVED WITH UNDULY HIGH PROTECTIONISM. THE ABSENCE OF  
FOREIGN COMPETITION, OF WHICH THE U.S. HAS BEEN AS  
GUILTY AS ANYONE ELSE, RESULTS IN LESS EFFICIENT HIGH  
COST EQUIPMENT BEING SUPPLIED TO THE ARMED SERVICES.  
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION  
SHOULD APPLY TO THE ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY AS WELL. UN-  
FORTUNATELY, FRENCH HAVE TOO OFTEN IDENTIFIED THEIR  
NATIONAL ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY AS EUROPEAN WHICH IS NOT  
THE CASE. THE KEY ELEMENT OF STANDARDIZATION FOR THE  
ALLIANCE, SECDEF CONCLUDED, IS TO SUPPLY THE BEST  
EQUIPMENT AT THE LOWEST COST, AND TO OVERCOME PAROCHIAL  
CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT WHICH COMPANY GETS THE CONTRACT.  
RUSH

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